

Definition of Critical (Essential) Research Activities

- Activity that if discontinued would generate significant data and sample loss
- Activity that if discontinued would pose a safety hazard
- Activity that maintains critical equipment in facilities and laboratories
- Activity that maintains critical samples and/or animal populations
- Activity that if discontinued would incur an excessive cost in money or time*
- COVID-19 related activity that has a timeline for deployment that could address the current crisis
- Activity that has US government-mandated security and access requirements, cannot be performed remotely, and whose activity is deemed critical by the US government
- Activities specifically requested by a US Government sponsor to continue during this time
- Clinical trial activity that if discontinued would negatively impact a patient's care

*An assessment in this category is subjective and difficult. The PI or faculty member must write up a justification for such a categorization that will be reviewed by the Departmental Chair, and the two in consultation can then make a decision. If needed, the Chair should consult with the Associate Provost for Research and Scholarly Inquiry (Keith Bonin) at WFU.

Guidelines for Performing Critical Research Activities

If people have to be in the laboratory use flexible **non-overlapping shift schedules** (differential time of day and day of the week) when safety permits (unless standard safe lab practice requires a minimum of two people in the lab at any time).

Follow **strict social distancing** (maintain distance of at least 6 ft.) and decontamination guidelines (listed below).

Essential lab personnel will come to the lab for the purposes of continuing critical research work only. Hand washing will be done each and every time a person enters or exits the lab for any reason. Only one person will be allowed in the tissue culture room at a time. No groups of individuals are allowed to eat lunch together in a break room or congregate in the building. No more than two individuals should be in a break room at a time.

Perform non-laboratory-based work remotely (data analysis, manuscript revisions). All data should be saved to Google Drive or a NAS which can be accessed via VPN. No computer work should be done on personal computers in the lab.

No in-person group lab meetings until further notice.

All meetings should be held via phone or internet video conferencing.

Essential personnel will be advised to follow **decontamination guidelines** below:

- Leave doors open and limit the use of doorknobs.
- Clean your phone/cellphone and do not take your cell phone with you to the restroom. Do not leave your phone on surfaces that are in common use.
- Wear disposable gloves to reduce your propensity to touch your face.
- Do not share pens/pencils. Carry a pen with you for your own use.
- If you need to use a *keyboard*, other than your own, *clean it off as well as the mouse*, **before and after** you use it.
- If you are using shared equipment clean off the knobs, handles, touchscreens, etc.
- Keep a distance (at least 6 ft.) from other people.
- Sneeze/cough into your elbow.
- Do not reuse Kleenex, dispose of immediately after its single use and wash your hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Use an elbow or your knuckle on elevator or other buttons and leave the light switches on.
- Use the automatic door openers; after using staircase railings, hands must be washed.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of headphones, iPod and cell phones. At home, clean your remote controls.
- Do not share lab coats and do not pile used lab coats up with clean ones. Have your lab coats laundered professionally.
- Do not put on Chap Stick or makeup outside of your home.
- When leaving a restroom, just after washing your hands, grasp door handles with a paper towel as a barrier and throw away after exiting.
- Wash your hands, even when you think you do not need to.

List of Possible Remote Research Activities

- review literature
- write literature reviews
- maintain and update laboratory notebooks
- organize data and carry out both current and back-burnered data analysis
- draft proposals
- draft manuscripts
- work on books
- software development
- carry out numerical calculations
- work on experimental design
- use of digitized archives and online research collections
- video and phone interviews
- online, video, and phone research/scholarship conversations & group meetings – also helps us to **stay connected socially**
- writing